

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: AFRIKAANS NEWSPAPER MAKES POLITICAL CAPITAL OF ROCKFELLER
VISIT

REF: A) PRETORIA 3639 B) CAPE TOWN 640

1. THUS FAR ENGLISH AND AFRIKAANS PRESS COVERAGE OF CHASE
MANHATTAN CHAIRMAN DAVID ROCKEFELLER'S CURRENT VISIT TO
SOUTH AFRICA HAS BEEN BOTH FACTUAL AND FAVORABLE (REFTEL B).
PRESS IS HIGHLIGHTING PICTURES OF ROCKEFELLER WITH HIGH GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS AND QUOTING HIS STATEMENTS THAT CHASE MANHATTAN
WILLING TO INVEST IN HOMELANDS IF PRACTICAL OPPORTUNITIES ARISE,
THAT HE SEES GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN SA SCENE SINCE HIS LAST
VISIT 14 YEARS AGO (MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND BETTER PAY FOR
BLACKS), AND THAT THERE IS NOW LITTLE PRESSURE ON BANKS
TO WITHDRAW INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA. PROMINENT TREATMENT
OF ROCKEFELLER STORY IN BOTH LANGUAGE SECTORS REFLECTS FACT THAT
MANY SOUTH AFRICANS, REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL AFFILIATION, REGARD
HIS VISIT AS SOMETHING OF COUP FOR THIS DIPLOMATICALLY ISOLATED
COUNTRY.

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PAGE 02 PRETOR 03661 041327Z

2. THIS VIEW WAS ARTICULATED AND GIVEN SPECIAL TWIST BY PRETORIA AFRIKAANS DAILY, OGGENDBLAD, IN OCTOBER 4 EDITORIAL WHICH SAID VISIT SHOWED THAT GOVERNMENT HOMELANDS POLICY WAS SLOWLY BUT SURELY COMING TO BE APPRECIATED BY OVERSEAS OBSERVERS. OGGENDBLAD ALSO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT US CAMPAIGN AGAINST FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA HAD "FAILED" AND CONCLUDED THAT, ON BALANCE, SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT NOT BE DOING SO BADLY AFTER ALL IN ITS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

3. ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRETORIA NEWS EDITORIA FOCUSED ON CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE TO BE PLAYED BY FOREIGN INVESTORS AND, IN THIS CONTEXT, ARGUED THAT AID FOR HOMELANDS DESERVES SPECIAL CONSIDERATION.

4. COMMENT: OGGENDBLAD'S SELF-SERVING LINE ON ROCKEFELLER VISIT IS NOT SURPRISING. SAG, AFRIKAANS PRESS AND SOUTH AFRICA FOUNDATION ALL HABITUALLY TRY TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF VISITS BY PROMINENT PERSONS. THEY DO THIS BY PLANTING IMPRESSION THAT VISITORS SUPPORT GOVERNMENT POLICY OR THAT VISIT REPRESENTS DIPLOMATIC "BREAKTHROUGH" FOR SOUTH AFRICA, SOMETIMES TAKING LIBERTIES WITH VISITORS' INTENTIONS. ROCKEFELLER VISIT HAS BEEN COVERED RESPONSIBLY FOR MOST PART, BUT MORE EXPLOITATION OF THIS KIND CANNOT BE EXCLUDED.
SMITH

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